

**LAWRENCE COUNTY
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PANEL
JULY 12, 2006**

Public Meeting to Collect Testimony on the 2007 – 2010 Draft Transportation Improvement Program, Air Quality Conformity Determination for the TIP, and the Long-Range Regional Plan Amendment Request

Meeting Held:

Jurors' Holding Room, Second Floor, Old County Courthouse, County Government Center, 430 Court Street, New Castle, PA
7:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 12th

In Attendance:

Panel members:

Everett Bleakney, PPP Co-Chair
Christine Sands, PPP Co-Chair
Helen Jackson, Lawrence County Planning Commission
Leonard Lastoria, New Castle Transit Authority

Panel resource persons:

Amy McKinney, Lawrence County Planning
Frank Gingras, Lawrence County Planning
Jim Gagliano, Lawrence County
Tom Wilkinson, PENNDOT District 11-0
Stephanie Ma, PENNDOT District 11-0
Vicki Antonio, New Castle Transit Authority

Other attendees:

Poncho Exposito, Mahoning Township Supervisor

SPC Staff: Chuck DiPietro
Doug Smith

Meeting notes:

1. Welcome and Introductions

PPP Co-Chairs Everett Bleakney and Christine Sands opened the meeting, welcoming all attendees. SPC staff member Chuck DiPietro was introduced and the meeting was turned over to him so he could provide an overview of the TIP and Air Quality Conformity process as well as the Long Range Plan amendment request for the North Shore LRT project.

2. Statement of Purpose of the Meeting

Chuck reinforced that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft update of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's TIP, Air Quality Conformity document and LRP amendment. This is not the meeting to testify for new projects to be added to the TIP.

3. Basic Review of the TIP Update, Air Quality Conformity, and LRP Amendment Request

Chuck provided an overview of the process now underway to update the transportation improvement plan. The TIP represents the highest priority transportation projects (both highway and transit related) in the ten county southwestern region of Pennsylvania for federal fiscal years 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. In the summer of 2005, the Public Participation Panel held a public meeting to receive testimony regarding projects for consideration on the 2007-2010 TIP. The draft TIP has been under development since then and is now up for review. A 30-day comment period is being conducted June 27 through July 26, 2006 to provide the public with an opportunity to review the program information and submit comments to SPC and its planning partners. Public comments are then reviewed and responded to as appropriate in a Public Comment Response Document prepared by SPC.

Other draft documents also offered for comment include the Air Quality Conformity Assessment, and an amendment request to the 2030 Long Range Plan.

Air Quality Conformity Assessment is a requirement to demonstrate that the region would meet federal air quality standards with implementation of the projects in the TIP. Essentially, we must prove that by adopting the TIP, the quality of the air in the region will not be degraded, and hopefully will be improved.

The amendment request to the 2030 Plan is sponsored by Port Authority and due to a \$42 million cost increase to the North Shore Connector LRT for a total project cost of \$435 million. The funds to cover this cost increase have already been secured from sources outside the TIP.

All of these proposed plans will be presented at the July 31st 2006 Commission meeting for anticipated approval. If approved, the TIP Update and Air Quality Conformity documents will replace the current plans and become effective October 1, 2006.

4. Public Comment

Christine Sands, City of New Castle

Expressed concerns about pedestrian safety issues at the intersection of Grant Street, State Street, and Sampson Street in the City of New Castle. Questioned whether improvements at this location were part of the scope of work for the Grant Street Bridge project (MPMS#29340), which has construction funding on the draft TIP. SPC staff will contact the PennDOT project manager for the Grant Street Bridge project to get an answer to this question and relay the information back to Ms. Sands.

With the last public comment received and no other person wishing to speak, Chuck DiPietro closed the meeting.